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An Approach to Poetry Appreciation*

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ONE OF the most heartening things on our cultural horizon today is the revival of poetry as a living art. Poetry is today becoming a part of our common consciousness as it has seldom been in the past. During the past winter in New York three poetical dramas, Maxwell Anderson's *Winterset*, T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, and Auden's *Dance of Death* played to interested and responsive audiences. During the same season three of Shakespeare's dramas, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Taming of the Shrew*, and *Macbeth* packed the theatre at every performance. Anyone who has seen a Harlem audience, composed largely of Negroes, sit spellbound through a performance by colored actors of *Macbeth* and has seen that same audience file quietly out, talking in low, earnest voices of the play they had just witnessed, could not fail to be impressed by the fact that great poetry is capable of speaking directly and eloquently to even the uninstructed. When a popular priced W.P.A. theatre can play Shakespeare to a filled theatre night after night, when on the nights on which the men and women on

the relief rolls are admitted free almost two thousand people have to be turned away because no more seats are available, we have a social as well as a cultural phenomenon. When great art is also popular art we have reason for rejoicing.

The question that concerns us as teachers is how can the schools aid in the movement to bring poetry back to the people where it belongs. How can we create sensitive and discriminating audiences, intelligent readers and possibly poets for the future? We are all aware of the dangers of professionalism in art. We know well how thin the voice of the poet becomes and how empty his song when he is aware that he addresses himself, not to his people but to a few. A great artist needs a great audience. We can help to prepare that audience.

The problem of poetry in school resolves itself into two main aspects, that of the selection of poetry and of the techniques for its presentation. These two aspects are so closely related that it is an artificial though convenient device to separate them. Every poem carries within it an indication as to the technique most suitable for its full realization. Only by heeding this indication can we hope to be

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successful in awakening a real response. Many of the disheartening experiences that have come to teachers eager to awaken children to the joys of poetry are traceable to the fact that they had failed to think and feel their way through the material to be presented and so selected an inappropriate technique.

In a discussion of this length it is impossible to suggest except in a general way a basis for the selection of material. The age of the group, its emotional maturity, its social background, are all governing conditions. On the basis of the numerous studies that have been made on children's reading preferences it seems safe to say, however, that certain fundamental appeals can be relied upon from the primary through high school and possibly beyond. We know that children respond to definite rhythms. Other things being equal, the poem that sings itself captures their fancy. In similar fashion they prefer simply told incident and clear cut characterization. They have little interest in nature as such, but have a lively interest in people and in animals. Humor, to appeal to them, must be of the hilarious and fairly obvious sort. The ironical, satirical, and whimsical are more likely to puzzle than to amuse them. The abstract, the philosophical, and the didactic have no appeal for the young. They have not yet experienced enough of life to be thoughtful about it. The business of extending the boundaries of experience is their fascinating occupation. The explorer has little time to trouble himself about the value of what he has discovered. That must wait for future days.

All this implies that much of the world's great poetry is not for children. That should not discourage us. There is enough good poetry and to spare of the sort to which they can respond. Fortunately we have many poets like Frost and De la Mare, poets who speak with the authentic voice of poetry and yet speak

with such utter simplicity that even the very young can understand them.

In planning a program of poetry appreciation for the schools there are certain considerations that it is well to keep in mind. One of these is that poetry does not present simply another problem in reading. Unfortunately poetry has difficulties peculiar to itself. This fact has emerged in every study made of the response of students to poetry. It is not peculiar to children but must be reckoned with in dealing with adults as well. Interestingly enough, L. A. Richards, in his study of one hundred college students at Cambridge, all of them superior adults, found that these men and women were struggling with the same difficulties that troubled children at all age levels. There is an amazing unanimity in the findings of all studies of poetry appreciation. Richards found that to many students the verse form itself was so powerful a distraction that they had difficulty in making out the plain sense of a poem. He found also that they failed in both auditory and visual response and so failed in sensuous apprehension. Their visual images tended to be vague or erratic. Their emotional responses were either over facile and sentimental or inhibited. On the intellectual side their reactions to a poem tended to be colored by their prejudices and critical preconceptions. They approached a poem with their minds made up and so it failed to have its effect.

All this suggests that the appreciation of poetry is an art and must be approached as such. As a reaction against the old method of dissecting a poem line by line we have swung to an opposite extreme that is almost as disastrous. Abercrombie warns us that an undifferentiated enthusiasm soon wearies, while a growing knowledge means a growing interest. This danger is very real today, when the prevailing method of centering the study of literature about some focal

point is liable to delude us into thinking that poetry can simply be read as other things are read. Our problem is to discover and utilize techniques that will help children to respond to the rhythms of poetry and to make them sensitive to its emotional appeal and its imagery. The old method of memorizing the names of metres and rhyme schemes and listing the technical terms for various types of imagery aimed to do this. Its intention was adequate, but it failed because it sought logical classification rather than vital experience. As Abercrombie remarks in this connection, Adam and Eve saw the animals before they named them. It is highly possible for children to be responsive to the various techniques of poetry long before there is any need for their naming a single one of them. As a matter of fact, studies made seem to indicate that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing in this direction as it is liable to lead to absurd critical preconceptions that stand in the way of an honest response. Not only children but adults as well often fail to understand what a man is actually saying because their minds are occupied by what he should say and how he should say it.

One of the most promising techniques for the development of an appreciation of poetry through active participation is choral reading. Through the work of Marjorie Gullan in England and many teachers in this country who have organized verse speaking choirs we have been made aware of how artificial is the distinction between the work of the speech teacher and that of the English teacher. Certainly in the field of poetry appreciation this is obvious. If we grant that a growing awareness of the various appeals of poetry is necessary to true appreciation and grant likewise that through the elementary school and the high school such awareness must come through experience, we cannot afford to ignore the opportunities for development that

come through choral speaking. This becomes more clear when we compare the characteristics that make poetry suitable for verse speaking and those that are generally appreciated by children. We find by such a comparison that there is a high degree of similarity. In verse speaking we select material that has marked rhythm, a chorus, a refrain, or other recurring effect, in short, poetry that is allied to the simpler kinds of music. We choose, also, poetry that has a theme directly and clearly stated as the speaking choir cannot depend upon its audience having a previous knowledge of the material being given. The imagery used, like the music, must be vivid, immediately effective and comprehensible. We select, also, material in which the portrayal of life is colorful and dramatic. Such selection implies that we include poetry that both general classroom experience and scientific investigation have shown to be most effective with young people. It allows, also, for a program of poetry appreciation that begins in the primary and runs through high school.

What does choral reading provide in the way of a deepening awareness of poetry as an art? Primarily it awakens children to the beauty of language. Words allied to music becomes magic things and the obligation to speak them beautifully, simply, effectively, creates a new reverence for them. Speech is the material of poetry, but too often it has taken on a commonplaceness from its everyday use. Verse speaking arouses in children a lively, almost physical response to rhythm. Through working out speech patterns in poetry children become aware, as they would never become aware through formal instruction, of various types of rhythm, marching rhythms, dancing rhythms, skipping rhythms and subtle modulations of rhythm within a poem.

The initiation of a choral reading program in a school presents no serious dif-

ficulties. While ideally we might wish that every English teacher were a trained teacher of speech as well, we know well that such is not the situation today. We cannot wait for poetry appreciation until the emergence of the ideally trained teacher. Any teacher who has a reasonable and sympathetic understanding of poetry and children can make a beginning. Group verse speaking is a co-operative enterprise and development comes through experience. Even young, inexperienced teachers with no technical training have succeeded in making poetry speaking a beautiful and vital experience for their children. It is a technique, also, that is quite as available for the teacher in a small rural school as for the city teacher.

The use of dramatizing as a means of developing appreciation, because it has been longer established in our schools, needs less comment. Much that has been said in regard to choral speaking applies to it also. Certainly not only poetry that is written in dramatic form but all poetry that is dramatic in its intention should be so treated. Here as elsewhere we must go to the individual poem for our direction. Its fundamental nature will dictate the technique we must use. Ballads, scenes from Shakespeare, can best be presented in this fashion. Dramatization, like choral reading, preserves for us the value sought for but seldom achieved in the once prevalent method of requiring memorization of stipulated amounts of poetry. There is a real value in having children familiar with a wide range of poetry and familiar in such a way that the beauty of its phrases is in their minds and the echoes of its music in their ears. Such familiarity comes, however, from having experienced poetry, from having lived long and happily with it, not from having accomplished a task of memorization.

The social and psychological values of both choral reading and dramatization

cannot be more than touched on here, but they will be apparent to any teacher. The social impulse back of great literature is becoming increasingly apparent to all of us. More and more the poet is coming to be thought of, not as the lonely singer singing in isolation of his private joys and griefs, but as the interpreter of his time and his people. More and more, also, are we coming to realize that if we hope to build a great and spiritual civilization we must plan for shared aesthetic experiences on a broad social scale. Art in the most inclusive sense must be part of every man's experience, art that he helps to create rather than passively accepts. If poetry appreciation is to be a part of life and not merely a classroom experience it must be approached with a social viewpoint. If we remember, to list only two instances from the past, that Greek drama was a broad community enterprise, and that Elizabethan poetical drama was rooted firmly in the life of its day, and recall, also, to turn to our own day, that Marjorie Gullan has worked effectively in verse speaking with groups of English working men, and that the federal theatre project has elicited a wide popular response from men and women everywhere, we can be assured that there need be no cleavage between school and community in the matter of aesthetic appreciation.

A third technique for the development of poetry appreciation is one that grows out of a program of art appreciation. This method has more limited applications than the two previously discussed and is possibly useful only in the upper grades and in senior high schools. Its values are so real, however, for a limited area that it should be mentioned. We realize that the poet attempts at times to emulate the artist in painting pictures. Like the artist he is sensitive to the emotional values of color. If pictures and poems that are based alike on similar color pat-

Newbery Prizes: Awards and Authors

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SINCE 1922 the John Newbery Medal has been awarded annually by the Children's Librarians' Section of the American Library Association for the most distinguished contribution to literature for American children. Authors of foreign birth may submit their books provided they have been written in this country. The Newbery Medal is the gift of Frederick Melcher, the editor of *Publisher's Weekly*. With it Mr. Melcher perpetuates the name of John Newbery, the eighteenth century publisher, who saw, "that children had notions of their own about their reading and his books were known wherever English children laughed and played and said their rhymes." The prize is most appropriately named after John Newbery, who first conceived the idea of publishing books expressly for children. Newbery's famous juvenile library was made up of tiny volumes four inches tall bound in "flowery and gilt" Dutch paper, the secret of the manufacture of which has been lost. Among the titles were, *The Renowned History of Giles Gingerbread*, a little boy who lived upon learning; *The History of Goody Two Shoes* credited to Oliver Goldsmith; and *Tommy Trip and His Dog Jowler* probably written by Newbery himself. Goldsmith called John Newbery the philanthropic publisher of St. Paul's Churchyard. This was in acknowledgment of financial aid which the bookseller gave to many authors in distress, Goldsmith and Dr. Samuel Johnson being among his beneficiaries. In

The Vicar of Wakefield by Goldsmith, Newbery is referred to as "a red-faced, good-natured little man, who was always in a hurry."

In 1922 the first John Newbery Medal was awarded to Hendrik Willem Van Loon for his book entitled *The Story of Mankind*. This was written primarily for his two sons and in a mood which rebelled against the "dry as dust" study of history of his youth. Van Loon was born in Rotterdam in 1882, and was educated in private schools in The Hague and Gouda. He came to America and studied history, economics, and the history of art in Cornell and Harvard. He taught history of art in the University of Wisconsin.

In *The Story of Mankind* the author shows remarkable skill in presenting the story of the great epochal movements and world crises so simply and so fascinatingly that the juvenile mind, with limited or no knowledge of the historic or scientific background, reads it with the avidity that is shown for a fairy tale. To the adult reader its chapters are equally interesting. Although necessarily more sketchy than exhaustive, it is a smoothly written encyclopedia of political, educational, ethical, philosophical, and scientific history with an occasional digression to bring out the author's interpretation of some reference. At the close of his chapter on the Norsemen Van Loon says, "Why should we ever read fairy stories when the truth of history is so much more interesting and entertaining?" He leaves a

salutary, wholesome taste in the minds of young readers. Although in conformity with historic data he recounts barbarities and pillages, he does not stress details of conquests and intrigues. He presents missionaries, poets, printers, philosophers, artisans—all who have helped with religious, intellectual, and industrial progress. He shows how the long elemental inactivity of feudal Europe was broken like ice before a summer's sun. He is most delightful in the chapter on chivalry, depicting the love of risk, adventure, and the ring of arms. He describes the picturesque mimicry of high sentiment, of heroism, love, and courtesy. The tenor of the closing chapters is most encouraging—that by the power of his will man can liberate himself from the limitations of every condition. In the laboratory, amid the rattle of factory wheels, in the quiet home, within the portals of our schools, a new declaration of independence is being forged, namely, the power to recognize, above the petty agitations of our lives, the vast sweep of mighty forces moving to beneficent ends.

The author's illustrations are most unusual and it is said they were done at first with burnt match sticks. There are more than 150 illustrations and maps representing ideas rather than events.

The second Newbery Medal went to Hugh Lofting in 1923 for his book entitled *The Voyages of Doctor Doolittle*. This is called the first real children's classic since *Alice in Wonderland*. Mr. Lofting wrote the quaint voyages as a continued-in-our-next series of letters to his children while he was at the front during the Great War. Later his wife suggested that they be published in book form. Mr. Lofting insists that authors should not "write down" to children, and surely the delightful seriousness of the amazing doings of the astounding doctor accounts in part for the charm of the book.

Here we get a nonsense story whimsically told with careful attention to detail. Dr. Doolittle is a queer old man who loves animals more than the best people and turns his attention to the care of them. Tommy Stubbins, son of the cobbler of Puddleby-on-the-Marsh tells us how he became acquainted with the doctor. He tells of the famous voyage to Spidermonkey Island and of efforts to learn the language of the shellfish. It is an exhilarating story, one that children love. The queer little drawings furnish much of the enjoyment.

The next year, 1924, the Newbery Medal was awarded to Charles Boardman Hawes for his book called *The Dark Frigate*. The author died suddenly two days before the book was published and the prize was awarded posthumously. Charles Boardman Hawes was a New Englander who received his early education in the public schools of Bangor, Maine. From there he went to Bowdoin College, graduated, and had one year of graduate work at Harvard.

The Dark Frigate is an adventure story, a tale of pirates of the seventeenth century. Its setting is English both on land and on sea, and has to do with young Philip Marsham, grandson of a clergyman and son of a sailor, who accidentally discharged a gun in a tavern kitchen and had to flee for his life. Philip went to sea aboard the *Rose of Devon*, in somewhat dubious company. It was not many days before her course and character were sadly changed. There were fights at sea and on land, plots and counterplots. Finally Philip returned to England after many hazards, fought for the king at Newbury, lost a great inheritance, and at last departed for Barbados in the same ship in which he had long before adventured with the pirates. This is an excellent story filled with healthy adventure vitalized by a sound historical setting.

The next award, 1925, was given to

Charles J. Finger for *Tales from Silver Lands*. Charles J. Finger, born in England, traveled about the world to see all that there was to see. When yet a boy he came to America. He has been in Africa, South America, and the Antarctic. He has explored all kinds of odd, little-known places. As an engineer he worked in South America and has lived with those he met—Indians, miners, and sailors. In *Tales from Silver Lands* he gives us a collection of nineteen South American folk tales taken from the lips of native story-tellers and retold with a fanciful charm which children and adults alike enjoy. "The Calabash Man" is a typical story. It tells of Aura, who married the beautiful Anaitu and by patient labor successfully performed, wins the land from cruel days to the glory of kind and gentle ways.

In 1926 Arthur B. Chrisman won the medal with *Shen of the Sea*. Chrisman lived next door to a Chinese boarding house in a poor section of Los Angeles. There he made fast friends with a wise, kindly man of China who interested him in Chinese life and literature. Thus we get sixteen short stories about Chinese people and life which blend happily a foreign atmosphere with a sense of reality. Some of these have a folklore quality and all are delightfully told. They contain a wealth of reference to Chinese customs and surroundings. They tell of quaint characters, as for example, of Ah Mee whose hopeless mischief and love of jam led to the invention of printing; of lazy Ah Fun who blew up the bedstove with the first gunpowder; of Ah Tcha, The Sleeper, who steeped leaves from a bush and in this way discovered the drink that can drive away sleepiness. All the stories are amusing and attractive and reveal the practical philosophy that has governed Chinese living for thousands of years. Although Mr. Chrisman has traveled a great deal he has never been in China!

The illustrations are by Elsie Hasel-

riis of Copenhagen, Denmark, the artist who has revived the art of the silhouette in Europe. They alone are sufficient to make the book unique.

The following year, 1927, the medal was given to Will James for *Smoky*. Will James was born in a covered wagon which had stopped for the night in a creek bottom in Montana. A year later his mother died and soon his father followed her, leaving the boy to the care of an old French Canadian trapper. Sometimes the child was left alone for weeks at a time while the trapper was away on a fur-hunting trip. Needless to say his education was neglected; he never went to school but was much interested in drawing and tried to draw everything he saw. After the death of the trapper, Will set out for Montana and found a job herding saddle horses at night. He drifted through the West as a cowboy, winning a reputation as an expert rider and taking a prominent part in rodeos. Due to an injury, in 1920, his fancy riding came to an end. Then he turned again to drawing and gradually his illustrations began to appear in magazines. Next he began to write sketches of cowboy life and it was not long before he was recognized as an unusual writer and artist.

Smoky, his prize book, is the story of a horse—a wild horse born on the range. He was jet black but when he was a yearling he had changed to mouse color. Therefore his name—Smoky. Man he had never seen until the Cowboy Clint, a bronco buster, came into the picture and drove Smoky to the corral for branding. Gradually the two became friends, were separated, and after exciting adventures met again to the satisfaction of both. The illustrations are masterpieces.

In 1928 the Newbery Medal went to Dhan Gopal Mukerji for *Gay-Neck*. Dhan Gopal Mukerji was born in Calcutta, India, in 1890. At the age of eighteen he graduated from Calcutta Univer-

sity, came to America and graduated from Leland Stanford in 1914. *Gay-Neck* is the story of a beautiful pigeon owned by an Indian boy in Calcutta, and is permeated with the spirit of India, the land of the author's birth. We are told how Gay-Neck was fed, taught to fly, and how he learned never to mistake the way to his master's house and heart, as well as to avoid the talons of the hawk and the eagle. It is most interesting when Gay-Neck, the pigeon, speaks to tell his own story of romance, of achievement, of fear, or of failure. Sometimes the author speaks and sometimes old Ghond, the trainer and companion. The illustrations are by Boris Artzybashev, the Russian master of the silhouette, and his drawings have a beauty of design completely in harmony with the text.

Eric Kelly was the next author to win the coveted medal. It was awarded to him for *The Trumpeter of Krakow*. Mr. Kelly was born in Massachusetts and attended school in Denver, New York City, and at Dartmouth College. He has done newspaper work in Boston and several other cities. At the present time he is an instructor in American Slavic literature at Dartmouth College. In 1918 he was in relief work with the Polish Legions in France and went with them to Poland traveling through camps and cities for three years.

The plot of his book was written when the author was studying and teaching at the University of Krakow. It is a story of mystery and adventure. The first scene occurs in 1241 when fierce Tartars who "knew not mercy, nor pity, nor God" sacked and burned Krakow. After a long night of fire and hideous sounds, the young trumpeter, from a little balcony high up on the front of the church of Our Lady, knew that he was alone in the midst of a terrible enemy. When the morning sun showed that it was too late

to retreat, it came to him, young as he was, that he was a part of the glorious company of Polish men fighting against savage invaders. An arrow pierced the breast of the young trumpeter when he neared the end of his song and the melody ceased.

Two centuries later Joseph Charnetski, a lad of fifteen, entered the city of Krakow with his parents. The difficulties that they meet from the time they enter the city of Krakow are unfolded to the reader in a most interesting manner. Lovers of mystery stories will see in this book the dangers and the romance of life in the fifteenth century. The author has presented the fiction of an imagined hero so vividly as to increase the intensity of interest in Polish history. When the award was given in 1929 at Cleveland the original trumpet was on exhibition.

In 1930, *Hitty: Her First Hundred Years*, by Rachel Field won the Newbery Medal and Hitty's dream of flying came true when Rachel Field, joint owner of the doll with Dorothy P. Lathrop, carried her by airplane into Los Angeles where the Newbery award was made at the annual convention of the American Library Association. "She was greeted by circling planes containing many celebrities who radioed to her the news that her autobiography was to be awarded the John Newbery Prize."

Rachel Field was born in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Nine months of the year she lives in New York and the other three months she spends on Sutton Island off the coast of Maine. She knows and loves her state of Maine folk and pays a beautiful tribute to them by dedicating *Hitty* to the state of Maine. This was the first year that the Newbery Medal was won by a woman writer.

Hitty is a combination of biography and American history written with much humor and charm. It is a story of a tiny

old-fashioned doll discovered by Miss Field and Dorothy Lathrop, the illustrator, in the window of an antique shop in New York. "Both of these women wanted Hitty but she was an early American doll, a real museum piece, and very expensive." Finally she was bought in partnership and her imaginary life history written by Miss Field. Hitty's life was crowded with adventures and she gives lively glimpses of the widely different places and people that she encounters during her one hundred years and of manners and modes of her time. Hitty had many mistresses, for she lived in New York, Philadelphia, the South, and finally got back to the state of Maine and into the old Preble farmhouse. From here she was sold and finally reached the antique shop in New York. Children enjoy following her on land and sea, in foreign countries, and various parts of America. Through all her experiences, no matter how trying they are, she smiles serenely. Boys like it because it is full of adventure and rings true. The illustrations are by Dorothy Lathrop and are an additional charm to an already interesting book.

The next year, 1931, Elizabeth Coatsworth's *The Cat Who Went to Heaven* won the medal. It is an appealing story of a Japanese artist and his wistful little cat, Good Fortune, who finally achieves heaven. Good Fortune is a little three-colored cat and is said to be sure to bring good luck to the home of the poor young artist. The tale has a background of Buddhist legends concerning the various animals who went to bid the Great One farewell at his deathbed. The cat being proud and haughty was not included among their number. The legends used are the legends of the snail, elephant, horse and other animals which had rendered service to Buddha, or in whose forms he was once incarnated. All of these are woven into a connected story as the artist "dipped his

brush in spring water, touched it with ink, and drew their pictures." Into this lovely and imaginative story the author has put some of the beauty of the East and the gentleness of a religion that has a place even for the humblest of living creatures. Good Fortune stays near her master and shares the agonies of artistic creation, living with him the legend of each animal as he paints it, waiting eagerly for her place. The cat is the means of presenting a beautiful idea, religious and spiritual in its significance. The illustrations are by Lynd Ward and fit the story so aptly as to seem inspired.

Elizabeth Coatsworth is a New Englander and makes her home in Hingham, Massachusetts. There she is known as Mrs. Henry Bestian, and her husband, a Quincy man, is a lecturer, traveler, and writer of some note. Elizabeth Coatsworth has written much poetry for adults as well as many other books for children. She has traveled since she was a little girl, visiting Egypt, the Orient, Mexico, Guatemala, Morocco, and many other places. Her interest in legends, particularly in religious myths, led to writing *The Cat Who Went to Heaven*. In fact three elements, interest in myths, memories of the Orient, and delight in the ways of cats met and blended together during a time of comparative leisure in California. This story was written, Miss Coatsworth says, "in a mood of pure joy."

In 1932 *Waterless Mountain* by Mrs. Laura Adams Armer won the prize. It is the story of a Navajo boy who felt called to become a medicine man, and is, therefore, a picture of Navajo life as seen by Younger Brother, hero of the book. The reader is taken to an Indian engagement party, to a trip up the Waterless Mountain, to witness a scene between the Medicine Man and the mountain lion that wishes to attack the horses. The good will between the white man of the trading

post and the Indians shows how responsive Indians are to kindness. Here children are confronted with a different picture of the Indian than the usual one of cruelty.

Mrs. Armer wrote *Waterless Mountain* because her paintings could not fully express all she knew and felt about the Navajos. She visited the Black Mountain region of Arizona and her one ambition, while there, was to be allowed to copy their sacred sand paintings which are made on the floor of the medicine lodge as a part of the ceremonies of healing. Not only was she allowed to do this, but the Navajos also permitted her to take part in a ceremony. Her husband, who is also interested in art, helped with the illustrations of the book.

Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze won the 1933 prize. Elizabeth Foreman Lewis, the author, devoted herself to the missionary field in China where she identified herself successfully with the people. Her notes on China, first kept for her young son, became the core of her story about Fu. Like all who see beneath the surface of things she says, "Differences there are in the two civilizations of America and China, differences in ways of thinking and habits of living, but these for the most part seem superficial."

Young Fu, apprenticed to a famous coppersmith, experiences many adventures. He is mischievous, but honest. He arouses the jealousy of fellow apprentices, works hard, but lives thrillingly. The psychology is that of any boy the world over, but the environment is distinctly Chinese and the differences, superficial in the long run, are a lure to the eager reader.

In 1934 the prize went to *Invincible Louisa* by Cornelia Lynde Meigs. She lives in the middle west, but her imagination, as shown by her sea stories, transcends environment as well as time and space. Hers is an honesty that frankly states achievement comes from real labor

and sacrifice. "You must make time for your project and you must work intensively," is the theme of her message to aspiring authors.

Invincible Louisa is the biography of our beloved Louisa M. Alcott. A major charm is its authenticity, and in addition to its historical basis, there exists in the author's interpretation of the facts a vitalization and an artistic sympathy that bring the tomboy of our adored Meg-Jo-Beth-and-Amy before us as no other work has yet succeeded in doing.

Dobry by Monica Shannon was given the prize in 1935. It is the story of an ambitious Bulgarian boy whose artistic yearnings rise above daily living, and his mother's loving but fearful opposition. The illustrations by Atanas Katchamakoff are one with the story. It has been hinted that word and pen pictures together paint the life of the artist.

Sickness is never a happy experience, but out of a dangerous illness came a beautiful story, for Monica Shannon wrote *Dobry* during a convalescent period. Perhaps her rich gift with words comes partly from her Irish heritage, partly from the influence of the "wide open spaces" of California where she lived as a girl, and of the Sierra Nevada ranch where she lived after marriage.

In 1936 the prize goes to *Caddie Woodlawn* by Carol Ryrie Brink. This is a thoroughly American story because Caddie is the pioneer child of Wisconsin. Mischievous, naughty, brave, generous and altogether a tomboy, she lives in the pages of this newest of prize books gloriously—the typical American one likes to believe.

Carol Ryrie Brink chose her grandmother as a heroine—surely a charming tribute to family ties. The author spends much of her time in France, but that she is essentially American shows in this frontier story so perfectly illustrated by Kate Seredy.

Some Characters of Charles Dickens in Terms of Modern Psychology

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THE NAME of Charles Dickens is secure in the great society of the immortals. Unlike many sons of genius, his fame was secure even before death. Dickens had a firm belief that his literary products belonged to posterity. In his will is the following:

I conjure my friends on no account to make me the subject of any monument, memorial or testimonial whatever. I rest my claims to the remembrance of my country upon my published works and to the remembrance of my friends upon their own experience of me in addition thereto.

Charles Dickens belongs to the ages. He is with the immortals. It is fitting to inquire, "What makes Dickens great?"

Dickens is not great because of his logical perfection of plot. When compared with George Eliot in this respect, Dickens is a weakling. He writes rambling tales about rambling people. Dickens is not great because of his contributions to history. *The Tale of Two Cities* and *Barnaby Rudge* are his only novels which bear the earmarks of historical research. And certainly no historical scholar would recommend these two volumes for accurate data on the events considered. Dickens made no contribution to science. He did not even possess a university education. He did nothing to advance the frontiers of scholarship. Even the most sanguine admirer would not accredit him with any fundamental contribution to philosophy. No friend can deny that he was a bit superficial about ideas and fre-

quently indulged in rapturous sentimentality. Dickens lacked the acid intelligence of Voltaire, the culture of Matthew Arnold, the cosmopolitanism of Goethe. And yet Dickens' pages never grow old. We love to go back and read again *Copperfield*, *Chuzzlewit*, and the *Old Curiosity Shop*. As we do so, it is not just the memory of Auld Lang Syne. In his volumes are fresh leaves and new buds. Why is Dickens great?

Dickens is great because of his ability to delineate character. The delineation of character is Dickenism, and irrefutable proof that genius is gypsy. In 1842 Dickens wrote to Mr. Joseph S. Smith: "Let me say in answer to your letter that the wanderings, history, and the death of Little Nell are quite imaginary and wholly fictitious." Little Nell really never lived, and yet she did live and will forever live. And so with *Copperfield* and *Dombey* and *Micawber*. They live more powerfully than many so-called great ones of the flesh. They live as completely in our hearts and imaginations as Napoleon, Julius Caesar, or Bismarck. Eliot could construct a perfect plot, Wordsworth could interpret nature, Voltaire could sting with satire, and Shelley could express the noblest aspirations of the human spirit; it was the mission of Dickens to produce a gallery of celestial characters who will live eternally with mankind. These characters are with us today and tomorrow. It was the ability to portray

characters that made Dickens great. Because of this ability one should never speak the name of Dickens except with reverence, as Arnold said of Shakespeare.

What a gallery of characters Dickens produced, and how alive these characters are! Dickens was the literary spokesman of Victorian England, and his creations ante-date modern psychology. But his characters seem to illustrate all the modern psychological concepts without the terminology. Let us examine several of his characters in terms of modern psychological concepts.

David Copperfield as a child seems to be overcome by the concept of "inadequacy." The world is so large and he so small and ineffective, that he is powerless against such colossal forces. When Copperfield marries Agnes at the end of the book, modern psychology would recognize a "sweet lemon" mechanism. Copperfield loved Dora even though she did burn the mutton. Theirs was a true marriage. His union with Agnes appears but a frail biological and sociological convenience. Copperfield cannot have a whole loaf; why not be glad for a half?

Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations* is the victim of insidious sex complexes. Her suitor having failed to appear for the marriage, she invokes eternal hatred and vengeance against all men. All through the years she leaves undisturbed the prepared wedding feast and sits in her chair, one shoe off and one shoe on. Her "introversion" or reflection upon her state, results in a "martyr complex." Her insidious complexes make of her one of Dickens' most interesting characters. Ever eager for revenge on men, she thwarts and almost wrecks the lives of Estella and Pip.

In *Scrooge* of the *Christmas Carol* we have another example of "introversion." Dickens describes Scrooge as a "squeezing, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner; hard and sharp as flint from which no steel had ever struck out

generous fire; secret and self-contained; and solitary as an oyster." Dickens adroitly performs a miracle of reformation of Scrooge through the punch bowl. The ghost of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, reveal Scrooge to himself as he was, as he is, and as he might be. The result is a life recharged with social motives.

In the *Tale of Two Cities*, Sydney Carton provides an interesting illustration of psychological "compensation" or substitution. Carton loves Lucy Manette but recognizes that he cannot aspire to marry her. She is too fine; he has drunk too much wine and has spent too much time in the gutter. Accepting the stubborn fact that she is not for him, he sacrifices his own life for her lover. Literature has no finer example of ethereal sublimity combined with depravity. Dickens shows through Carton that being a failure is sometimes close to being a saint. If Dickens' own soul descended into hell in Dorrit, it was resurrected into heaven in Sydney Carton.

Crummles in *Nicholas Nickleby* is a splendid illustration of an exaggerated ego, a "superiority complex." In the story, Crummles' theater business is always to the fore; yet in reality one knows it is a joke. However Crummles is always pompous and delightful rather than pompous and dull.

Micawber in *David Copperfield* represents many psychological mechanisms, but particularly "sweet lemon" and "sour grapes." If he wanted to achieve something but could not do it, he considered it not worthy of his calibre. Micawber is one of Dickens' most fascinating characters. Micawber and Dorrit are the same characters in two different novels. Micawber is always waiting for something to turn up. He is a classic proof that a poor man may not be defeated by life. He is usually optimistic; in despair he is exultant. Dorrit, however, shows a character overcome by circumstances.

Mr. Pickwick has an obsession in that he is proud of his legs. Dr. Manette, after years of imprisonment in the Bastille, has a complex of hate. Little Nell's grandfather in the *Old Curiosity Shop* was a queer old man. Mr. Winkle was always falling off his horse.

Dickens is great primarily because of his ability to portray character. What are his peculiar techniques? What is the secret of his wizardry in fitting characters found in midnight rambles about London, into a novel? It must be admitted that a story is more than a person, and a novel is more than a group of characters.

Dickens was at his best in killing off people. In his notes one finds, "I still have Dora to kill." The sentimental sublimity of death was never better expressed than in the case of Paul Dombey:

"Floy, this is a kind, good face. I am glad to see it again. Don't go away, old nurse. Stay here. Good-by."

"Good-by, my child," cried Mrs. Pipchin hurrying to his bed's head. "Not good-by?"

"Ah, yes, good-by. Where is Papa?" His father's breath was on his cheek before the words had parted from his lips. The feeble hand waved in the air as if it cried, "Good-by," again.

"Now, lay me down and, Floy, come close to me, and let me see you."

Sister and brother wound their arms around each other and the golden light came streaming in, and fell upon them locked together.

"How fast the river runs between its green banks and rushes, Floy. But it's very near the sea now. I hear the waves. They always said so."

Presently he told her that the motion of the boat upon the stream was lulling him to rest. Now the boat was out at sea and now there was a shore before him. Who stood on the bank?

"Mama is like you, Floy. I know her by the face."

The golden ripple on the wall came back again, and nothing else stirred in the room. The old, old fashion. The fashion that came in with our first garments, and will last unchanged until our race has run its course, and the broad firmament is rolled up like a scroll—the old, old fashion Death.

O, thank God, all who see it for the older fashion yet, of immortality. And look upon us, Angels of young children with regards not quite

estranged, when the swift river bears us to the ocean.

The death of Dora, Copperfield's child-wife, represents the pitiable end of an incongruous affair. When Copperfield's mother dies, one shudders among the white grave stones of the cemetery. One can feel the wind whispering through them on winter evenings. In the case of Little Nell, half a continent is stirred up. But personalities, principalities, and powers—even God himself cannot save her. All agencies arrive too late. But the total effect is stupendous. The death of "my convict" in *Great Expectations* is less rhetorical and dramatic than that of Little Nell, but one's elemental sympathies with him are so great that his passing touches the heart-strings.

No one ever died with more courageous self-sacrifice than Sydney Carton in the *Tale of Two Cities*. Having lost Lucy Manette, Carton gives his own life for his rival. Literature records no incident more sublime than the one in which this man of failure and of the gutter goes to the guillotine with the little seamstress. Dickens' description of it is inimitable. Many a literary artist has used the same Biblical quotation, but none ever with more effectiveness:

She kisses his lips; he kisses hers. They solemnly bless each other. The spare hand does not tremble as he releases it; nothing worse than a sweet bright constancy is in the patient face. She goes next before him—is gone; the knitting women count TWENTY-TWO.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

The murmuring of many voices, the upturning of many faces, the pressing of many foot-steps in the outskirts of the crowd, so that it swells forward in a mass, like one great heave of water, all flashes away,—TWENTY-THREE.

It was the mission of Dickens to make the common uncommon. Dickens revealed London to Londoners. He fired an interest in man and things which Lon-

doners "had passed a thousand times nor cared to see." The typical Londoner had found little of interest in Bill Sykes, in Major Bagstock, in the Little Midshipman, in Dick Swiveller, in Quilt, in Uriah Heep. In the hands of Dickens a broomstick or a scarecrow takes on flesh and blood; more than this, it becomes dynamic. Some characters whom he clothed with immortality are but ingenious combinations of indiscriminate syllables from different London streets. In Dickens' novels, the critic recognizes a multitude of stock subjects; but at the same time the hand of a magician at work. No subject could be less inspiring than the hard, tyrannical, musty school in *David Copperfield*. But Dickens' picture of this school is so clear and so fascinating that one can never forget it. It is generally agreed that events lose their force through communication or transference. On the contrary, Dickens was able to make a thing happen over again and to make it happen better. The result was that Dickens' world became "a maze of white roads, a map full of fantastic towns, thunderous coaches, clamorous market-places, uproarious inns, strange and swaggering figures, the great fundamental kindliness of old English manners." In this world also were crudeness and vulgarity as well as uncanny, barbaric greed. In such a world moved the characters of Dickens' creative imagination. It seems impossible to separate the genius of the man from the genius of his London. One wonders what Dickens would have done in the environment of Scott.

Dickens speaks for the unsuccessful. In all his gallery of characters, there is not one true portrait of an aristocrat. In this respect he is unlike Scott or Thackeray. Dickens found virtue only among the poor. Henry Adams tells us that Dickens appeared uneasy in the drawing-rooms of society. Dickens appears to be-

lieve that the failures of the world have no one to speak for them. So he elects himself as their spokesman. And what a queer lot of characters he gives us! Can any one sincerely doubt that the people we fly to in Dickens are the ones we fly from in real life? In fact nearly all his most colorful characters are really a great bore. Who would choose as a personal friend Miss Havisham, Micawber, Crummles, Uriah Heep, Pickwick, or Winkle? But Dickens believed that the unsuccessful had much to contribute. Gilbert K. Chesterton has stated Dickens' point of view as follows: "Let the clever people pretend to govern you, let the unimpeachable people pretend to advise you. But let the fools alone advise you." This is the whole philosophy of Dickens, that we should keep the absurd people as our friends. At the same time, his characters were his own best arguments against such heinous paradoxes of society as wealth and poverty, beauty and ugliness, culture and ignorance. Dickens never forgot that his own parents went to a debtors' prison. *Hard Times* was a flaming indictment of such a social system. *David Copperfield* is a revolt against Calvinistic tyranny.

Dickens' characters appear to possess a kind of pre-celestial existence. They are of today and of tomorrow. They cling to us and will not let go. One feels that he has known them in a previous world, that he has known them all his life, that he will continue to know them after this life is ended. This is particularly true of Dickens' "angel children" such as Paul Dombey and Little Nell. These characters appear too perfect to be spared from heaven for long. They were fashioned in the deep-seated religious convictions of Dickens. Modern scientists would classify Dickens, like Lincoln, as a mystic in the field of religion.

Dickens exalted individual personality.

He found little hope in Louis XIV's conception of the state. Dickens exalted individual personality by taking the poor individually. Among the shabby and blackened walls of Victorian England, Dickens saw slipping about, unique figures. Some were brave and good, some grotesque and horrible; all were romantic. Above the cries of the populace, the chuckles of schemers, the whines of beggars, above the inarticulate refrain of the "still sad music of humanity" Dickens could detect the yearning of the individual spirit. Like Victor Hugo, Dickens used individuals in strategic situations to electrify social motives. Nowhere has the hatred of the peasant class for the aristocracy been expressed more forcibly than in Dr. Manette's letter written in the Bastille. As the peasant boy wounded by an aristocrat lies upon his back and tells Dr. Manette of the ruin of his family and the disgrace of his sister, one sees the dynamite of the French Revolution. Dickens' concrete picture of this individual peasant boy is an immortal plea for social and economic justice.

Micawber in *Copperfield* becomes the symbol of the ne'er-do-well. In the pen of Dickens, Micawber is not just an insignificant part of an inarticulate mass. He is an individual who would bleed if one should prick him with a pin. Likewise, Uriah Heep counts at least one in the hands of Dickens; so also, do such epicurean characters as Bob Sawyer and Dick Swiveller. Dickens reveals a human personality in which the life current still exists. Dickens insisted always that we see the individual. His pages take on new meaning in the present highly mechanized society.

Dickens possessed a peculiar genius in the physical arrangement of words. It is illustrated in the death of Paul Dombey quoted above. Again, it is encountered in the mud-stain, blood-stain refrain of

Oliver Twist. The effect of unusual repetition of words is illustrated in the delirium of the peasant girl in the *Tale of Two Cities*:

I turned her gently over, placed my hands upon her breast to calm her and keep her down, and looked into her face. Her eyes were dilated and wild, and she constantly uttered piercing shrieks, and repeated the words, "My husband, my father, and my brother." And then counted up to twelve, and said, "Hush." For an instant, and no more, she would pause to listen, and then the piercing shrieks would begin again and she would repeat the cry "My husband, my father, and my brother," and would count up to twelve, and say, "Hush." There was no variation in the order or in the manner. There was no cessation but the regular moment's pause, in the utterance of these sounds.

Another peculiar and effective recurrence of words is shown in a speech of Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations*:

"Until you spoke to me the other day, and until I saw in you a looking glass which showed me what I once felt myself, I did not know what I had done. What have I done? What have I done?" And so again, twenty, fifty times over, What had she done?

Dickens' creative ingenuity in the use of words in ridiculous combinations is shown by the various letters of Micawber, among which is the following:

My Dear Young Friend:

The die is cast—all is over. Hiding the ravages of care with a sickly mask of mirth, I have not informed you, this evening that there is no hope of the remittance. Under these circumstances, alike humiliating to endure, humiliating to contemplate, and humiliating to relate, I have discharged the pecuniary liability contracted at this establishment by giving a note of hand made payable fourteen days after date at my residence, Pentonville, London. When it becomes due, it will not be taken up. The result is destruction. The bolt is impending, the tree must fall.

Let the wretched man who now addresses you, my dear Copperfield, be a beacon to you through life. He writes with that intention, and in that hope. If he could think himself of so much use, one gleam of day might, by possibility, penetrate into the cheerless dungeon of his remaining existence—though his longevity is, at

A Fifth Grade Dramatization of the Pied Piper

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THERE IS much said about the fact that, ideally, certain activities must spring spontaneously from the children themselves instead of being suggested by the teacher. However, teachers find that in most cases they must so arrange conditions that what they want to happen will happen: what has been called "setting the stage." The extremists probably object to even this; but one who really knows psychology realizes that the stimulus for the child's response must come from somewhere. Before the child can, with apparent spontaneousness, suggest an activity, he must receive the proper stimulus to result in the desired reaction. To arrange the school situation so that the pupil responses will take the direction wanted, and so that most of the individual reactions of a class will take the same direction, in order to make it possible for the group to work together—this is the office of the modern teacher. To bring about the outcome desired, the teacher needs skill, the skill which results from knowledge of child psychology and from experience with dealing with groups of children.

Of course, all that has occurred in the class previous to a particular situation as well as the experiences of the class in former grades will influence the amount of spontaneity of the pupils. If the children have never been allowed to make or carry out their own suggestions, no matter how skillfully the teacher may set the stage, she will not receive that type of response from the class. All this has to be

taken into account when preparing for any type of activity work. The less the pupils have had the more will the teacher have to originate the activity.

When in oral reading-literature our class began the abridged edition of Robert Browning's "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," the pupils had already had some experience in dramatization of their own pupil-made plays. As soon as our discussion for meaning got them interested in the piece of literature, one child asked if pupils might be assigned to the different parts and the class be allowed to read the selection in that way.

When a "Mayor" and "Corporation" and a "Piper" had been chosen and the reading from the seats began, another pupil asked, "Why couldn't we make a play out of it?"

Every one in the class was anxious at once to do this and all wanted to be "Mayor" or have some other important part. Therefore, the parts were passed around while we read for good interpretation and discussed the meaning of difficult words and expressions. Parts were then acted out each day, and then the parts for the final giving of the play were assigned for memorization. As these were all short, the committing of them to memory was no difficulty, especially as much of the poem lingered in everyone's memory from the reading and discussion.

All the children were in the final play, though there were only a few *speaking* parts. The cook, the man who found the nest in his hat, the women chatting, the

mother beside the baby's cradle, the special mice who performed in the second stanza were all specially assigned parts, as well as a group who formed the "people in a body" of stanza III. All the children who did not have these special parts sat in the seats and were first rats and later children who followed the Piper.

One of the best readers in the class was chosen to read the explanatory parts. He paused in his reading after each line or phrase when necessary while the actors performed and also at places where the actors spoke.

The children brought various materials for the play. Cotton was brought to sew to the fronts of the coats of the Mayor and Corporation. A doll that would cry and a cradle for it to lie in were brought by one child. Another brought a bowl and a spoon for the cook, and another an apron and cap. Others contributed a man's hat, two toy rats, a horn, a coal scoop, a toy shovel, and long skirts and hats and bonnets. Yellow and red crêpe paper was used to make the Piper's costume.

Because of the time necessary to go through the piece, we practiced the entire play but twice previous to the final day when it was to be given before the other grades of the building who were invited and some of the parents who wished to come. Nevertheless the dramatization turned out to be a great success, for the pupils went through it from beginning to end without a break.

The aisles of the school room were considered the streets of the town of Hamelin, and the children's seats and desks stood for the houses. In the seats scattered about the room the children sat who did not have other active parts in the play but were to act the parts first of rats and later of children. They should not all sit near together; and the seats between them can be filled with visiting children.

The things to be used in the play were arranged in the following manner. On one front desk was placed a large doll's cradle with a large doll in it that would cry when moved. A child, as the baby's mother, sits near to raise the doll at the proper moment to make it cry. A child to act as the rat that will bite the baby crouches near by, and bites the baby at the proper time. A rag dog and rag cat are placed on another front desk, and near them crouch two children as rats, who fight these at the proper time and knock them off the desks. On another front desk or a table is placed a large bowl and stirring spoon and a girl to stir, so that a speaking rat crouched near may lick the spoon. A man's hat upside down stands on another desk. Hidden inside of it are two or three toy rats. At the proper time the child who acts as this rat brings a bunch of excelsior hidden near and deposits it in the hat. Then a boy, acting as a man, comes to the hat, angrily throws out the excelsior with his hand, and then in disgust holds up by the tails the toy rats and then flings them away. Then he puts on the hat.

At one side several girls act as if chatting and near these crouch rats who are to squeak and drown their chatting. At the farther end of the front of the room three boys, dressed for the Mayor and the Corporation, sit on three chairs behind and at ends of a table. Cotton is basted on the front of their coats for ermine. A long strip of wrapping paper, colored blue, is spread in a convenient place, for the river Weser. The Pied Piper with his suit made of two colors of crêpe paper hides in the hall or cloak room. If the classroom has two doors, the Pied Piper should knock at one door, and the children and Pied Piper should disappear through the other one.

The Pied Piper enters through door when told to enter, and advances to the Council Table. Later he goes to end of

first aisle where he blows three blasts on his horn and continues to blow at intervals as he marches up and down the aisles and across the room to the river, where he stops while rats plunge in. As he marches up and down the aisles, the children seated in the seats get up and, crouching and squeaking, march after him. At the river, they all but one drop down. After the rat who swims across has made his speech, and while the Mayor has everyone digging out paper and excelsior from places where it has been hidden, these rats get up and return to their seats ready to act as children.

The Piper comes back at the proper time to demand his guilders, and then when refused, advances again to go up and down aisles in same manner as before with the children getting out of their seats and following, the girl by the doll cradle, picking up the doll, and the boy with the crutches remaining far enough behind

that he does not reach door until they have passed through. The Pied Piper goes to the river as before, but turns off and goes through door.

After the lame boy has spoken, the Mayor and all the men take coal shovels, scoops, and toy shovels, and everyone pretends to dig near the door, the men pausing now and then to wipe their foreheads with their handkerchiefs, while the women look on wringing their hands and wiping their eyes. Finally the men stop exhausted. The Mayor then points and four messengers go in four different directions, as the reader reads these directions.

The children who pass through the door quickly don long skirts and old-fashioned bonnets, and reassemble at the door. At the point when the reader says, "In Transylvania there's a tribe of alien people," a person stationed near the door, opens it to show the children in their old-fashioned clothes.

NEWBERY PRIZES

(Continued from page 214)

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Taking Books to the People

CALVIN T. RYAN

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AFTER I had spoken before a group of patrons at a Parent-Teacher meeting, and was showing them the books I had taken with me, a mother said to me, "How can children keep from reading these days with all these interesting and attractive books?"

How true! Yet unless children know about the books and have access to them, how can they read them? Unless parents know of the books, and of the significance of books in the home, how can we expect them to be interested in providing books for their children?

Something must be done, therefore, to take these books and the idea of reading them directly to the parents. The stress on books during Book Week is too apt to end in merely commercializing the idea, and the week becoming merely an occasion for dealers and publishers to sell their wares.

It does not follow that the teacher who can teach children's literature successfully can also interest parents in books for children. Many of the college courses offered in children's literature stop when they have taught the members something about the age-grade placing and selection of books. For two years now I have been teaching my classes that they must know children; then they must know children's books. But that is not enough. Knowing children and children's books may make them successful teachers in the classroom, but their work does not stop there. We must see to it that the children have access to books. We must reach the home somehow. We must interest parents. We must instruct them how to buy books intelligently.

For years our college librarian has sponsored Book Night once a month throughout the winter months. Knowing of my work, she asked me to have the members of the class furnish the program for Book Night just preceding Book Week.

In the class we had had drills on how to demonstrate books, and on how to review children's books; incidentally, also, on how to give book talks before interested groups. After some practice in this work, the class voted by ballot on the members they wanted to represent them at the college Book Night. I had nothing to do with the selection, but if I had made the choice personally, I would have made only one change in the five selected, and her work later showed that I would have been wrong.

The team, as they were called, gave the whole program. One talked on books for the pre-school and kindergarten level. Another on books for the child of six or eight. A third talked on poetry suitable for children up to nine or ten. A fourth talked about books for the child of eight or nine. And the fifth took the books for the upper grades and high school level. Each student accompanied her talk with illustrations from books at hand.

The girls were commended so highly that I hit upon the idea of using them for demonstrating books at the various places at which I had been asked to speak during Book Week. At these meetings, I usually gave a short talk on the significance of books and reading, and then introduced the girls who would review and demonstrate some books in a given field.

At the close of our demonstration and talk, interested persons were given a

chance to see the books we had with us. At one meeting we displayed about 250 children's books. At other places we took not more than twenty-five or thirty.

Two of the team spoke before the local Rotary club and met with a most hearty response. Two gave radio talks over the local broadcasting station. Two talked before the American Association of University Women at their afternoon meeting, and two more at the night meeting of an all-day session. Three accompanied me on two trips where I spoke before Parent-Teacher groups.

Wherever the girls assisted they received many compliments on their work. It was splendid experience for them. While parents were looking at the books we had with us, these girls assisted by

commenting on the various books, by answering questions about the books, and by showing them to the children whenever they were present.

A check-up at the local book dealer who specializes in good books for children reveals the information that he has sold more of his better class and more expensive books than he has ever sold at this time of the year.

Students who can demonstrate and review books successfully must of necessity know books. Wherever they go to teach they will exert pressure for wider reading, for better books in the homes, and for a wiser selection.

Taking books to the people is the best of sport. No teacher, no librarian can serve her community better.

SOME CHARACTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS

(Continued from page 219)

present (to say the least of it), extremely problematical.

This is the last communication, my dear Copperfield, you will ever receive,

From

The Beggared Outcast
Wilkins Micawber

It is difficult to classify Dickens in the commonly recognized categories of literature. He has traits of Cervantes, of Rabelais, of Voltaire. He was a humorist through and through. Although his famous rambles were usually made at night, he found in them the humor of the morning. He was argus-eyed for the picturesque in a crowd. He was always looking forward. In this sense, all of his novels might be called *Great Expectations*. Dickens was always a Pollyanna. He has

nothing in common with Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, or Eugene O'Neil. To Dickens all of life was usually black or white. His villains come to a bad end; his brave young people come to earthly prosperity; his angel children die fascinating and enviable deaths. Thackeray said of Dickens, "I am grateful for the innocent laughter, and the sweet unsullied pages which the author of *David Copperfield* gives to my children." Dickens' novels are free from any such sex obsessions as exist in contemporary literature. Dickens, however, was not at his best in his own novel, *Great Expectations*. In this one Dickens was trying to be detached and critical; he was trying to be Thackeray. Dickens was at his best when he was trying to be Dickens.

Books to Grow On

QUAIL HAWKINS

Sather Gate Book Store, Berkeley, California

BOOKS for boys and girls daily become more stimulating and richer than ever before. Each year's output includes two or three genuine additions to children's literature, and good to grow on. There are certain books, new and old, which a great number of children find stimulating, and a larger number of other books which might be considered equally good. It is nearly impossible to be sure which book, when it is published, is going to have this especial touch.

The following list includes books both new and old that are liked by a large number of present-day youngsters, and at the same time are widening to the mental horizons in one way or another. These books satisfy children's love of the absurd, their enjoyment of strange peoples and places, their fondness for food, their recognition of the familiar, and their appreciation of the past. It contains books for children of all ages. The pictures are both in color and in black and white, for children like both. Naturally this is neither an exhaustive list nor even a fairly complete one.

Aldis, Dorothy—*Here, There, and Everywhere*. Minton. \$1.00.

A collection of poems about young children which is enjoyed by quite young children as well as by their elders. A companion to *Everything and Anything*.

Beskow, Elsie—*Aunt Green, Aunt Brown, and Aunt Lavender*. Harper. \$2.50.

This illustrator is one of the most popular for the younger children. *Pelle's New Suit*, and others are all delightful. The binding is very fragile, unfortunately, but the books last long enough for absorption by the child.

Brink, Carol—*Caddie Woodlawn*. Macmillan. \$2.00.

This year's Newbery Medal book, and an excellent pioneer story of Wisconsin around Civil War times. A real contribution to young people, being for those about 11 to 14 years.

Brooke, Leslie—*Johnny Crow's Garden*. Warne. \$1.00.

Everything Leslie Brooke touches is both beautiful and funny. Many children cut their teeth on the Johnny Crow books, and very good they are.

Buchan, John—*Prester John*. Houghton. \$2.50.

This exciting and vigorous tale of an African uprising was written by the present Governor-General of Canada. The best type of adventure tale for older boys and girls.

Burglon, Nora—*Children of the Soil*. Doubleday. \$2.00.

Joseph Auslander said this book was "luminous with an interior grace" which expresses exactly the quality of this tale of two children in Sweden which sets it apart from the general run of books. For about the fifth grade.

Canfield, Dorothy—*Understood Betsy*. Grosset. \$1.00.

A book which every teacher as well as every girl should read. A genuine little girl with the kind of problem that grows out of every-day life, handled with expertness and understanding. Fourth and fifth grade, and perhaps sixth.



Carrick, Valery—*Russian Picture Tales*. Stokes. \$1.25.

These delightful folk tales with the grotesque and entertaining black and white pictures are great favorites with children from four to eight.

Collodi—*Pinocchio*. Macmillan. \$1.00.

It is hardly necessary to comment on this famous tale except to say that it is probably the favorite of more children than perhaps any other story. Why? Perhaps because Pinocchio was bad, like many little boys and girls. Fifth grade reading usually.

D'Aulaire, Edgar and Ingri—*Children of the North-lights*. Viking. \$2.00.

A picture book of distinction with lovely lithographs. The D'Aulaire's work, from *Ola* to the *Conquest of the Atlantic*, is always enjoyed by children. First, second and third grades.

De Brunhoff—*The Story of Babar*. Random House. \$3.00.

There are three Babar books, each one priceless. Translated from the French with many absurd and funny pictures, these tales of the popular elephant furnish hours of enjoyment to the young person. An excellent substitute for the "funnies."

Doyle, A. Conan—*The White Company*. McKay. \$2.50.

An historical tale very popular with boys of about twelve to fifteen. It is often the turning point in their reading, opening up the pleasures of historical fiction to them.

Flack, Marjorie—*The Story About Ping*. Viking. \$1.00.

Kurt Wiese did the delectable pictures for this tale of a Peking duck. Everyone loves this, especially pre-school and first and second-graders.

Gag, Wanda—*A B C Bunny*. Coward. \$2.00.

Everything Wanda Gag has done is enjoyed by many children, from *Millions of Cats* to *Gone is Gone*. The *A B C Bunny* is particularly loved by two and three year olds. Miss Gag's new book, a translation and illustration of twelve of Grimm's fairy tales, is a publishing event, and a must-have for everyone.

Hillyer, C. V.—*Child's History of the World*. Appleton. \$2.00.

Written in an informal and ingratiating manner, this history of the world is enjoyed by children in much the same manner as candy. Many a teacher has found to her joy, that a chapter of this, read aloud, will keep the noisiest class quiet. Fourth, fifth and sixth grade reading.

James, Will—*Smoky*. Scribners. \$2.50.

There are several editions of this Newbery Medal book. *Smoky* is the eternally popular story of a cow pony, written in the vernacular by an ex-cowboy, with a flavor that no amount of perfect English could impart. Sixth grade and older.

Kipling, Rudyard—*The Just So Stories*. Garden City. \$1.00.

One young lady kept her Sunday school class in order by promising a new Just So story after every well-behaved Sunday school period. These tales really should be read aloud, or told exactly as written, as the words are too long to be read by the child most able to appreciate the stories. Can be used with children as young as five years old.

Lindsay, Vachel—*Johnny Appleseed*. Macmillan. \$1.00.

An excellent collection of this popular poet. Especially effective with young people. One teacher of freshman English told of her great success in introducing poetry by means of Lindsay and Masfield, and then on to Keats and Shelley, etc. Read aloud, this is a particularly good selection.

Lofting, Hugh—*The Story of Dr. Doolittle*. Stokes. \$1.50.

Even if the sequels aren't as good, the first Dr. Doolittle book is so funny and clever that nearly all children adore it. Fourth grade to sixth.

Major, Charles—*The Bears of Blue River*. Macmillan. \$1.00.

A hunting story of a hundred years ago which is one of the best means of capturing the interest of boys who don't care for reading. The vocabulary is simple, the story exciting, and not too young in content. Excellent for remedial reading. Fourth, fifth, and sixth grade reading level.

Milne, A. A.—*Winnie the Pooh*. Dutton. \$1.00.

The Winnie the Pooh books and the poems are so universally popular that they need no comment.

Otis, James—*Toby Tyler*. Harper. \$1.00.

A universally popular circus story for fifth and sixth grades.

Perkins, Lucy F.—*The Dutch Twins*. Houghton. \$1.75.

This needs no comment either. Why are children so intrigued by Holland? Another Dutch story with heavenly illustrations is the one by Hilda Van Stockum entitled *A Day on Skates*, published by Harpers at \$2.50.

Pyle, Howard—*The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*. Scribners. \$3.00.

The best version of Robin Hood with excellent pictures, but poor type. So much more vigorous than any other version that it should always be considered first.

Pyle, Howard—*Men of Iron*. Harper. \$2.00.

The outstanding historical tale of the time of King Henry IV of England. Brilliantly written and thoroughly liked by both boys and girls, from seventh to eleventh grades.

Ransome, Arthur—*Swallows and Amazons*. Lippincott. \$2.00.

The young people themselves have adopted these stories, of which the above named is first. *Swallowdale*, *Peter Duck*, *Winter Holiday*, and *Coot Club* are the following titles of a really excellent series of stories of a group of boys and girls in England. The age range is wide, from ten to sixteen years, generally speaking, with even younger children enjoying them when read aloud.

Reed, W. Maxwell—*The Earth for Sam*. Harcourt. \$3.50.

An excellent introductory geology so thrilling and well-told that children read it like fiction. *The Stars for Sam*, and *The Sea for Sam* are also good, but for older boys and girls, about fourteen years and older, while *The Earth for Sam* can be enjoyed by ten year olds. These are must-haves.

Rossetti, Christina—*Sing Song*. Macmillan. \$1.00.

A collection of verse for very young children which has proved a boon to many mothers. Charm-

ing black and white illustrations by Marguerite Davis.

Stong, Phil—*Honk the Moose*. Dodd. \$2.00.

Illustrated by the able Kurt Wiese, this runner-up for Newbery Medal last year is a marvelous combination of author and illustrator. Funny, a bit of real Americana, and readable, this has been accepted with open arms and laughter by the young people from seven years up.

Spyri, J.—*Heidi*. Rand. \$1.00.

This comes in innumerable editions, and is too well liked to need comment.

Thompson, Blanche J., ed.—*Silver Pennies*. Macmillan. \$1.00.

A most useful collection of poems, very popular with the youngsters, and worth owning.

Towsley, Lena—*All Around the Alphabet*. Farrar. \$1.00.

A tiny book with photographs of children much enjoyed by small children from a year and a half old to about six years.

Twain, Mark—*Tom Sawyer*. Harper. \$1.00.

A universally liked tale of a real boy.

Among those tales loved and missed if neglected are:

Potter—*Peter Rabbit*. Warne. \$.75.

Bannerman—*Little Black Sambo*. Stokes. \$.50.

Travers, P. L.—*Mary Poppins*. Reynal. \$1.50.

Brooks, Walter—*Freddy the Detective*. Knopf. \$2.00.

An Evaluation of the Yearbook*

WILLIAM S. GRAY
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THE Fourth Annual Research Bulletin makes four major contributions to teachers and technical research workers who are interested in the field of reading. It provides with certain limitations a picture of significant research at the elementary school level. It summarizes important findings concerning selected problems and points out serious limitations in our understanding of them. Furthermore, it justifies and gives vigorous emphasis either directly or by implication to various principles underlying instruction in reading. It also identifies many problems that are in urgent need of further study. These and other noteworthy items are the result of a broad survey of several hundred published investigations and a critical analysis of the methods and findings of more than a hundred of them. With a clear appreciation of the arduous labor and the exacting requirements involved in such an undertaking, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Yearbook Committee on its splendid achievement.

The general character of subsequent sections of this discussion was predetermined in a sense by the editor who requested a critical evaluation of the Bulletin guided by a set of questions submitted with Dr. Durrell's manuscript.

An intelligent evaluation of the Bulletin requires a clear recognition of its basic aims. As formulated last spring by the Executive Committee of the National Conference on Research in Elementary School English, the Bulletin was to pro-

vide a statement of principles, based on significant research, underlying instruction in elementary school reading. This aim was subsequently expanded by the chairman of the Bulletin Committee to include also a summary of unpublished studies from various research centers and brief reports of research in progress. In attempting to achieve these purposes, the contents of the Bulletin were organized around a series of challenging questions. As a result, basic issues relating to instruction in reading stand out somewhat more conspicuously than do the principles underlying instruction. It should not be inferred, however, that the latter have been altogether neglected. In the discussion of basic issues, important principles have either been stated directly or expressed in terms of the findings of specific investigations.

In attempting to achieve the foregoing aims, the committee worked under serious limitations. The space provided for the report was obviously inadequate. This resulted at times in abbreviated, sketchy accounts of significant findings and in such brief discussions of problems that their significance and implications are not always clear. To cite but one example: The question, "When should formal instruction in reading begin?" appears first among primary reading problems. Its discussion was limited to two statements: "Might it not be delayed with profit to the later primary grades? There is much discussion but little evidence on this point." The report as a whole would have been much more illuminating to both teachers and research workers if the results of outstanding stud-

* The Fourth Annual Research Bulletin of The National Conference on Research in Elementary School English, *Research Problems in Reading in the Elementary School*, by D. D. Durrell.

ies had been summarized more fully and their implications with respect to current practices and needed investigations more fully explained. If space did not permit so much detail the obvious alternative was to limit the scope of the problem studied.

A second general criticism relates to the fact that certain important phases of reading were given little or no consideration. For example, the steps or processes involved in comprehension and interpretation received very limited attention. This was doubtless due to the fact that few significant studies have been published in this field. On the other hand, the need for the intensive study of the higher mental processes that function in reading is very urgent. Similar statements may be made with respect to reading problems in the content fields and the elevation of reading tastes. In a somewhat different category are problems relating to "oral reading" and to "children's interests in reading" which were very briefly considered. Abundant evidence is available concerning issues in each of these fields. Furthermore, little consideration was given to unusual types of reading difficulties. This omission may be justified on the ground that the Third Annual Research Bulletin¹ presented abstracts of important studies in that field and summarized significant conclusions which they justified. It may be argued, however, that the topic deserved a place in this Bulletin because of the large importance which attaches to diagnosis and remedial teaching at the various grade levels.

A third general criticism relates to the plan of organization adopted in presenting the specific problems. In the section pertaining to primary reading, they were presented under three headings, namely those relating to general methods of beginning reading, to vocabulary development, and to word analysis. In the section

relating to the middle grades, they were organized under one heading, namely "problems of general methods." As a result, statements relating to radically different issues followed one after the other in succession. It would have been much more illuminating and suggestive if they had been presented under specific headings that covered somewhat broadly the practical issues encountered in teaching reading; for example, the character of the reading materials needed, the relation of reading to other school activities, the organization of instruction to provide for individual differences, methods of developing good habits of comprehension and interpretation, accuracy and independence in word recognition, speed of silent reading, quality of oral reading, desirable interests in recreational reading, the elevation of reading tastes, etc. The adoption of such a plan would have brought into obvious relationship challenging problems which now appear largely as separate issues.

The foregoing general criticisms will now be supplemented by comments concerning specific sections of the Bulletin. In harmony with the suggestion of the program committee, I shall direct attention primarily to the sections on "Reading Readiness" and "Middle Grade Reading Problems." The first of these sections is very helpful and suggestive. It summarizes much more fully than do other sections of the bulletin the related scientific evidence. This is especially true in respect to two issues, namely the level of mental maturity required for success in first grade reading and the elements in the mental-physical equipment of the child that contribute to reading readiness. Had more space been available, the results of other studies, such as the one by Cutright² in Minneapolis, should have been included. In that study, the relation of several factors to success or failure in

¹ *Reading Disabilities and Their Correction.*

² Prudence Cutright.

reading were determined by comparing a group of 135 first grade failures with a control group of 100 pupils. The study revealed the following significant facts: (a) general immaturity was more characteristic of the experimental than the control group; (b) boys failed more frequently than girls; (c) living conditions which are not conducive to the development of desirable attitudes toward school activities and study are vital factors; (d) health habits and physical defects are closely related to success or failure in learning to read; (e) the ability of pupils to adjust themselves intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally to school conditions, as rated by the teachers, was notably greater in the case of the control pupils; and (f) the use of the Sangren Information Test for Young Children showed clearly that many of those failing had a very meager range of information. Such findings are very suggestive concerning the elements involved in reading readiness. In this connection, the results of the study by Gates and Bond, referred to in the Bulletin under the heading "Research in Progress," should be very illuminating.

Throughout the section on reading readiness, it is assumed that the needs and achievements of pupils should be studied carefully before instruction in reading is begun. In this connection, two valuable procedures have been adopted by many teachers, namely giving tests of various kinds (mental, reading readiness, range of information, visual, auditory, etc.) and securing information through observation and other informal means concerning the intellectual, physical, emotional and social characteristics of pupils. Although brief reference was made in the Bulletin to some of the tests used in determining the reading readiness of pupils, the information provided is too meager for those who approach the problem with an inquiring mind. It would

have been very helpful to teachers if a somewhat detailed discussion had been included of the validity, merits, and limitations of the various measuring instruments available.

Furthermore, reference to informal procedures now in use, including checklists, systematic records of pupil responses and behavior, and anecdotal records, would have been of great practical value to teachers and a stimulus and guide to further research. As an example of the checklists which have been developed, brief reference is made to one used by teachers of Cincinnati³ as early as 1929-30. After much preliminary experimentation, the following list of categories was adopted under which significant items of information were classified: comprehension, sufficient command of English, good speaking vocabulary, wide and varied experiences, desire to read, interest, mental efficiency, physical efficiency, social attitudes, enunciation and pronunciation, traits and characteristics, daily performance and achievements. A summary of the various items included in several such lists would have been very suggestive.

The list of problems relating to reading readiness which were suggested for further study was prepared with great discrimination. There is urgent need of intensive studies of the various types of tests which are available and of the factors which are most closely related to success in learning to read. Of special importance in this connection is the need of thoroughgoing studies of the components of mental ability which are of greatest significance in acquiring good reading habits. The fact that some children with mental ages less than six learn to read readily and others with mental ages much above six do not make rapid

³ Hazel Clark and Spencer Shank, "Supervising a Reading Readiness Program," *The Principal and Supervisor*, pp. 460-70. Tenth Yearbook of the Department of Elementary-School Principals, 1931.

progress in learning to read suggests either that factors other than intelligence are of large importance in determining progress, or that gross measures of intelligence fail to identify variants which are highly significant. Experience and preliminary experimentation justify the assumption that both statements are more or less valid. A second problem suggested in the Bulletin that is in urgent need of intensive study relates to the relative importance for different types of learners of various elements involved in reading readiness. Available evidence justifies the conclusion that the approach to reading and the relative emphasis given to different phases of instruction should vary for pupils who differ in achievements, needs, and learning potentialities. The development and evaluation, therefore, of specific procedures in teaching pupils to read assume large significance in future programs of research.

Before passing on to other sections of the report, certain implications of the reading readiness concept should be briefly summarized. It implies, first of all, that pupils who enter the first grade differ widely, as a rule, in their readiness for reading and in capacity to learn. It follows that the time at which systematic guidance in learning to read should be introduced varies considerably. As a result, the need is urgent for the adoption of far more flexible programs of reading instruction, including plans of class or group organization, than have commonly been adopted. Furthermore, the rate at which pupils advance differs notably. No longer can we erroneously expect that all first-grade pupils, or the pupils of any higher grade for that matter, attain corresponding levels of achievement at the end of any given school year. As a result, the whole theory underlying the traditional plan of promoting pupils is vigorously challenged. We need in its place a theory of promotion which recognizes

the total development of the child rather than arbitrary standards of achievement in specific subjects at each grade level. The adoption of this view implies further that the guidance provided in reading for pupils in any grade or classroom should recognize clearly the various stages of development which they have attained. Furthermore, the instruction given should be so adjusted in amount and kind as to enable each pupil to advance continuously and successfully toward clearly recognized goals. The adoption of such a program is inevitable. Before its values can be fully realized, much intensive research is essential both in classrooms and laboratories.

The section on reading problems in the middle grades gives major consideration to the areas in which research has been done, to the inadequacies of the research techniques used and the results secured, and to specific problems requiring further study. The Bulletin rightly gives the impression that the problems of teaching reading which apply particularly to the middle grades have not been systematically or thoroughly investigated. The compilers of the Bulletin have rendered a genuine service in emphasizing this fact. For various reasons, the problems relating to beginning reading have challenged the interest of investigators for many years. During the last five years an increasing amount of interest has been exhibited in the more obvious problems at the secondary, college and general adult levels. Unfortunately, the problems of the middle grades have not received their due share of attention. Furthermore, the problems which have been attacked have not been pursued with sufficient thoroughness in many cases to justify conclusions or even to clarify fundamental issues. Because of the complex character of many of the reading problems which middle grade teachers face, these grades offer a very challenging field for

productive study and experimentation.

An analysis of the fifteen issues raised in the section shows that they relate to a limited number of broad problems. Three of them are related to certain objectives of teaching in the middle grades, namely the fundamental skills that should be developed, the recognition and word mastery skills that merit emphasis, and the values of oral reading. Two issues are related to rate of reading, namely methods of increasing rate and the results involved in adapting speed to various purposes and kinds of reading. Three are concerned with the thought processes involved in intelligent reading. Three others relate to best methods of promoting growth in meaning vocabulary, in developing skill in locating information, and in providing for individual differences. And finally, one problem is mentioned concerning each of the following: the merits of standard test lessons, workbooks, and isolated exercises; the outcomes in interests and habits of various types of instruction; the influence of teaching techniques on reading; and the relative difficulty of different forms of sentence structure. The fact should be noted that these problems relate largely to what might be called the basic habits and skills involved in reading.

Valuable as is the foregoing list of problems, it seems appropriate on this occasion to direct attention to others which should be included in any comprehensive program of research at the middle-grade level; for example, the unique objectives of reading instruction in the middle grades which merit major emphasis in teaching; significant characteristics and needs with respect to reading of pupils in the various grades; the kind of reading material which is most likely to challenge interest and effort and to extend experience in desirable directions; the relative merits of different ways of organizing and presenting reading ma-

terials to pupils who vary in reading achievement and needs; the basic steps and processes involved in clear, accurate comprehension, in breadth and depth of interpretation, and in the effective application of what is read to challenging issues; the specialized reading problems in each content field; the dominant reading interests of different types of pupils; methods of promoting wholesome interests in reading and in elevating reading tastes; and methods by which reading may contribute most to the development of stable and well-rounded personalities. Both of the foregoing lists are by no means complete. They illustrate clearly the tremendous amount of intensive classroom study and laboratory research that is essential to an adequate solution of reading problems in the middle grades.

The Bulletin has been very successful in paving the way for needed studies of many of the foregoing problems. Through careful analysis of the basic issues involved, at least half of the questions listed have been broken up into a series of related or sequential problems. The brief discussions accompanying the statement of many of them are very stimulating and suggestive. For example, in discussing what types of questions bring about greater gains in comprehension and more permanent retention, the author states: "It is conceivable that a few fact questions on a given assignment might make for superficiality rather than thoroughness in reading. Is a large number of specific questions superior to a few general study questions? What are the outcomes of different types of questioning?" Searching inquiry of this type must be continued by both teachers and research workers if valid solutions of many problems are reached.

In response to the question raised by the editor, "What research problem ranks first for immediate study?" may I suggest

two at the middle-grade level? The first is, How may instruction be adapted most effectively to the varying interests, needs, achievements, and capacities of the pupils who are assigned to any classroom? This is a very practical problem that confronts most teachers. By its very nature, it must be solved largely through intensive study by teachers and carefully-planned classroom experiments. A problem of major importance for the technical research worker relates to the mental processes and steps involved in reading different types of material and in reading for different purposes. Experiments have shown that fundamental differences are involved. It will be impossible for teachers to secure maximum, and oftentimes satisfactory, progress on the part of pupils until the higher mental processes involved in reading and the methods by which they can be developed are better understood.

Another notable contribution of the Bulletin merits vigorous emphasis in closing. Its analysis of reading problems

in need of further study indicates clearly that active co-operation is essential between research workers, school officers and teachers if rapid progress is made in their solution. The scientist must continue laboratory studies of the types suggested, discover fundamental differences in reading processes and habits, and outline the principles which determine effective methods of teaching and those which underlie classroom investigation. School officers must provide agencies for promoting the development of essential mental habits and attitudes, for applying the methods of investigation which are available, for checking the results of teaching, and for identifying additional problems for study. Teachers must be zealous students of reading problems, must apply the results of scientific studies in the improvement of teaching and must make use of scientific methods in the daily study of classroom problems. The Bulletin provides tremendous stimulus and guidance in extending and co-ordinating our efforts in these directions.

Shop Talk

DESTINIES of editors are likely to be obscure. Yet it is they who are indirectly, and often directly responsible for the course of literary history. This is particularly true of the editors of children's books, and it is therefore gratifying to find one such editor brought pleasantly before her public. Miss May Massee, who is responsible for the excellent books put out by the Viking Press, is the subject of

the issue of *The Horn Book* for July-August, 1936. Authors, illustrators, librarians, booksellers, and publishers have contributed articles on Miss Massee, and Miss Massee herself turns author with a brief article entitled "An Editor's Notebook." The issue is illustrated with cuts from volumes issued under Miss Massee's editorship.



From *The Fairy Fleet*. By George MacDonald. Illus. by Stuyvesant Van Veen. Holiday House

Children's Books of 1936

Folk Tales

Tales from a Finnish Tupa. By Charles Cloyd Bowman and Margery Bianco. From a translation by Aili Kolehmainen. Illus. by Laura Bannon. Whitman, 1936. \$2.50.

Good writing, artistic printing, and delightful illustration make this book desirable for personal ownership, and for schools and libraries. Editors, translator, and artist have worked together to produce a beautiful book. Recommended.

Albanian Wonder Tales. By Post Wheeler. Illus. by Maud and Miska Petersham. Doubleday, Doran, 1936. \$2.00.

The author is former American minister to Albania. This collection of tales of a little-known people is a valuable addition to the folk-lore shelves. The stories are presented in a form that adapts itself readily to reading aloud or re-telling.

Picture Tales from Spain. By Ruth Sawyer. Illus. by Carlos Sanchez. Stokes, 1936. \$1.25.

One of the excellent picture tales series. These gay and succinct little stories manage to give, through their style, something of the tone of the Spanish language.

Three Golden Oranges, and Other Spanish Folk Tales. By Ralph Steele Boggs and Mary Gould Davis. Illus. by Emma Brock. Longmans, Green, 1936. \$2.00. 8 years on.

These stories were carefully collected and set down by the authors; the illustrations were made in Spain. "Spain is, as a country, too individual, too reticent to be easily understood by a stranger. To know her folk tales and her music is to understand her better."

Tales of Troy and Greece. By Andrew Lang. With 17 illus. by J. J. Ford and a map. New ed. Longmans, Green, 1936. \$2.00. Up to 12.

This collection is, of course, standard.

Stories to Shorten the Road. Comp. by Effie Power. Decorations by Dorothy Bayley. C. P. Dutton, 1936. \$1.50. 8-14.

Humorous folk tales from many countries.

Ghosts and Goblins. Stories for Hallowe'en and Other Times. Selected by Wilhelmina Harper. Illus. by Wilfred Jones. Dutton, 1936. \$2.00. 8-12.

The stories are not found in other collections. Like the compiler's *Merry Christmas to You*, this is a valuable and attractive volume. Highly recommended for libraries and schools.

Ling, Grandson of Yen Foh. Adapted from the Chinese by Ethel J. Eldridge. Illus. by Kurt Wiese. Whitman, 1936. \$1.00.

Unusual material, attractively presented. The stories are concerned with ingenuity and intelligence rather than with magic.

Fiction for Young Readers

Jerry and the Pony Express. By Sanford Tousey. Doubleday, Doran, 1936. \$1.00. Up to 9.

No story of the Pony Express could fail to be thrilling. This one concerns a little boy who lent his pony to an Express Rider. Children will like it.

Mitty on Mr. Syrup's Farm. By Ruth Langland Holberg. Illus. by Richard A. Holberg. Doubleday, Doran, 1936. \$1.00. Up to 8.

In the earlier book Mitty captivated all her readers, so her return is heartily welcomed. Excel-

lent not only for text but for delicate pictures of the Middle West in the 1890's.

Little Girl with Seven Names. By Mabel Leigh Hunt. Illus. by Grace Paull. Stokes, 1936. 8-10.

A winsome, gay little story of a small Quakeress. Recommended.

The Doll House at World's End. By Marjorie Knight. Illus. by Clinton Knight. Dutton, 1936. \$1.50. 6-10.

Ship's Parrot. By Honoré Morrow and William J. Swartman. Illus. by Gordon Grant. Morrow, 1936. \$2.00. 6-12.

Mrs. Morrow's stories need no recommendation, but we'll give it one anyway. This is as good as the delightful *Ship's Monkey*.

Peggy and Paul and Laddy. By Mary Jane Carr. Illus. by Kathleen Vaute. Crowell, 1936. \$1.75.

A story of 8 and 9-year-olds in Oregon, near the Columbia River. Children will like to read these plausible adventures.

The Donkey Goes Visiting. The Story of an Island Holiday. By Patricia Lynch. Illus. by George Altendorf. Dutton, 1936. \$2.00. 8-12.

The characters in *The Turf-Cutter's Donkey* reappear in adventures which, since they take place in Ireland, naturally involve magic.

Teeny Gay. By Charley May Simon. Illus. by Howard Simon. Dutton, 1936. \$2.00. 6-10.

Teeny was a little girl who lived on a houseboat on the White River, in Arkansas. A refreshing, well-written story, giving an authentic picture of one aspect of American life. Recommended.

The Traveling Gallery. By Bessie Schiff. Illus. by Emma Brock. Whitman, 1936. \$1.50.

A winsome story about a little girl who went about the country with her father in a traveling photograph gallery.

The Oak Tree House. By Katharine Gibson. Illus. by Vera Bock. Longmans, Green, 1936. \$1.50. 8-12.

In the reign of Edward VI, a good man and his wife were put out on the highway because they could not pay taxes so they built themselves a house in an oak tree in the King's highway. A charming story. Recommended.

The Golden Basket. By Ludwig Bemelmans. Illus. by

the author. Viking, 1936. \$2.00.

Bruges as a child would see it. Highly recommended.

The Fairy Fleet. By George MacDonald. Illus. by Stuyvesant Ven Veen. Holiday House, 1936. \$1.25.

A beloved story, long out of print, is here presented in beautiful format, fine paper and printing, at a modest price. Recommended.

Animals

Wiggles, a Funny Little Dog. By Clara O. Wilson and May E. Pennell. Illus. by Marguerite Davis. Houghton Mifflin, 1936. 90¢. 4-7.

Tally-Ho. By Margaret S. Johnson and Helen Loring Johnson. Illus. by Margaret S. Johnson. Harcourt, Brace, 1936. \$1.75. 8-12.

The story of a Dalmatian dog. The authors communicate their love and understanding of dogs. An appealing book.

Tyras. By Marilise Lange. Illus. by Gunter Böhmer. Trans. by Ernest Boyd. Little, Brown, 1936. \$1.75.

The author's understanding and affection for dogs is evident. Tyras, a mastiff, is a pet of a doctor's family in a small German town.

King, the Story of a Sheep Dog. By Thomas C. Hinkle. Morrow, 1936. \$2.00.

Another good dog story. The setting is Western Kansas.

Beowulf, Guide Dog to the Blind. By Ernest Lewis. Dutton, 1936. \$2.00.

By the author of *Beth, a Sheep Dog*. Excellent and authentic.

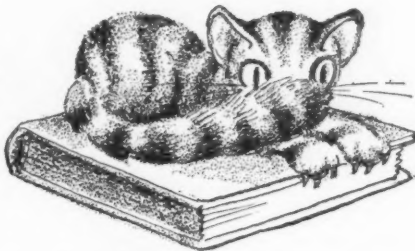
Skinny, the Gray Fox. By Agnes Akin Atkinson. Illus. with photographs by Spencer Roane Atkinson. Viking, 1936. \$1.50.

An account of the wild animal boarders who come to eat in the Atkinson's flood-lighted California yard. The photographs have caught the delicacy and timidity of the little foxes.

Buddy, the Bear. Written and illus. by Kurt Wiese. Coward - McCann, 1936. \$1.50.

For younger children. Buddy is a koala bear who with his mother, Biddy, lives in Australia. Beautiful pictures.

The Clever Cat. By Eleanor



From *Tales From a Finnish Tupa.* By Bowman, Bianco, and Kolehmainen. Illus. by Laura Bannon. Whitman.

Frances Lattimore. Illus. by the author. Harcourt, Brace, 1936. \$1.50. 6-8.

Carcajon. By Rutherford G. Montgomery. Illus. by L. D. Cram. The Caxton Printers, 1936. \$2.00.

"The mightiest of wilderness villains, a free-booter and a bully, a bandit who knows nothing of fear and who faces every animal and routs him. . . ." The wolverine described by a man who thoroughly understands his habits. An unusual book.

Picture Books and Books for Little People

What to Do About Molly. By Marjorie Flack. Illus. by the author and Karl Larsson. Houghton Mifflin, 1936. Up to 8.

Five-year-old Molly, sitting on the wharf for two hours, provided the fish for supper. Excellent.

Elephant Twins. By Inez Hogan. Illus. by the author. Dutton, 1936. \$1.00. Up to 8.

The usual tale of jungle babies who run away and get lost. Well presented and pictured, but not up to the author's Nicodemus books.

Nicodemus and his Gran'pappy. By Inez Hogan. Illus. by the author. Dutton, 1936. \$1.00. Up to 8.

The 'ever-delightful Nicodemus stays out of mischief this time, but his houn' dog gets into trouble.

Willy Nilly. Written and illus. by Marjorie Flack. Macmillan, 1936. \$1.00. 4-6.

A penguin who wanted to be different found it both uncomfortable and hazardous. Excellent humor. Recommended.

The Hog Goes Downstream. Written and illus. by Marion Bullard. Harcourt, Brace, 1936. \$1.50. 6-10.

A lively story of how the Muggendyke pig escaped too-insistent cleanliness and reached a cozy pen where he could wallow happily, told with the deft and delightful humor which Marion Bullard commands.

George Washington. By Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire. Pictures with text. Doubleday, Doran, 1936. \$2.00. 4-6.

A beautiful picture-book with sympathetic and straight-forward text. Recommended.

The Story of Ferdinand. By Munro Leaf. Illus. by Robert Lawson. Viking, 1936. \$1.00.

Ferdinand, a gentle bull, preferred sitting and smelling flowers to running and jumping. His persistence in following his tastes gained him a happy life under the cork tree. Beautiful pictures. Delightful nonsense.

Snipp, Snapp, Snurr, and the Yellow Sled. By Maj. Lindman. Illus. by the author. Whitman, 1936. \$1.00.

An addition to the vastly popular Snipp, Snapp, Snurr books. The adventures of these three little Swedish boys have been translated into many languages.

A Day at School. Text by Agnes B. McCready. Photographs by Ruth Alexander Nichols. Dutton, 1936. \$1.00. 7-8.

The Cotton Book. A photographic picture-book with a story. By William Clayton Pryor and Helen Sloman Pryor. Harcourt, Brace, 1936. \$1.00.

Some of the pictures (that opposite p. 56, for example) are confusing because there is nothing to give scale to the objects photographed. Informative.

The Dirigible Book. A photographic picture-book with a story. By William Clayton Pryor and Helen Sloman Pryor. Harcourt, Brace, 1936. \$1.00.

Busy Little Boys and Girls. A picture book especially prepared to help improve the speech habits of small children. By Hazel Mercer Duclés. Photographs by



From *William and His Friends*. By Elizabeth Naramore. Viking.

Legaré-Loving. Rand McNally, 1936. 10¢.

A carefully-prepared volume. Suggestions for the use of the book are given on the back cover. Recommended.

For Older Boys and Girls

GENERAL FICTION

The Gay Chariot. By Edith Bishop Sherman. Illus. Longmans, Green, 1936. \$2.00.

Wholesome fiction, cheerful, but not too syrupy. It concerns a motor-trip across the country by way of tourist camps.

Winterbound. By Margery Bianco. Jacket, endpapers, and frontis., by Kate Seredy. Viking, 1936.

A winter in a Connecticut farmhouse. A novel for girls written by an author who understands them.

Come Summer. By Virginia McCarty Bare. Longmans, Green, 1936. \$1.75.

A novel of young people working out their own destinies—always a fascinating subject to other young people. A New Hampshire farm is the setting.

The Will to Win and Other Stories. By Stephen W. Meader. Illus. by John Gincano. Harcourt, Brace, 1936. \$2.00.

A dozen stories of sports. The book is bound to find enthusiastic readers.

Sou'wester Sails. By Arthur H. Baldwin. Illus. by Gordon Grant. Random House, 1936. \$2.00.

A story of yachting, interesting, plausible, authentic. Furthermore, it is exceedingly well printed, and illustrated by Gordon Grant.

Tinker of Stone Bluff. By Nason H. Arnold. Illus. by Charles E. Sutterlin. Doubleday, Doran, 1936. \$2.00.

A boys'-school story.

The Sea Scouts of Birch-Bark Island. By Rupert Sargent Holland. Illus. by Walter Pyle. Lippincott, 1936. \$2.00.

Lots of action. Harmless, but not literature.

One Summer. By Martin Gale. Illus. by Margaret Van Doren. Viking, 1936. \$1.75.

The Strange Pettingill Puzzle. Two Mysteries for Boys and Girls. By Augusta Huiell Seaman. Illus. by Genevieve Foster. Doubleday, Doran, 1936. \$1.75.

Challenge. Stories of Courage and Love for Girls. Collected by Helen Ferris. Illus. by Marguerite de Angeli. Doubleday, Doran, 1936. \$2.00.

An excellent collection.

Scarlet Sheath. By Katharine Adams. Illus. by Decie Merwin. Macmillan, 1936.



From *Skinny, the Gray Fox.* By Agnes Atkinson. Viking.

Likeable young moderns in a mystery story. The setting is English.

Bulldog Sheila. By T. F. W. Hickey. Illus. by Chichi Lasley. Holt, 1936. \$1.75.

For Older Boys and Girls

INTERESTING SETTINGS

The Secret of the Chestnut Tree. A Mystery Story of a Girls' School in Old Virginia. By Helen A. Monsell. Illus. by Paul Laune. Bobbs-Merrill, 1936. \$1.75.

Allison's Girl. By Theodore Acland Harper. Illus. Viking, 1936.

The setting is Oregon. Mr. Harper writes understandingly and competently.

On the Golden Trail. By Hildegard Hawthorne. Illus. by Sanford Tousey. Longmans, Green, 1936. \$2.00.

The long overland journey from Massachusetts to California in the '50's.

Saddle and Bridle. By Fjeril Hess. Illus. by Margaret Ayer. Macmillan, 1936. \$1.75.

A Colorado ranch. Miss Hess's heroines are wholesome, likeable, and credible.

Jerky. The Story of Two Boys in the Old West. By Ned Andrews. Illus. by Sanford Tousey. Morrow, 1936. \$2.00.

"Written by a man brought up in the Arizona of which he writes, a man who has been a cattleman all his life. . . ."

Flag of the Desert. By Herbert Best. Illus. by Erick Berry. Viking, 1936. \$2.00.

The author tells a thrilling adventure story with a background of the Africa he knows so well. An excellent boys' book.

Footprints in the Dust. By Alice Cooper Bailey. Illus. Longmans, Green, 1936. \$2.00.

A mystery story. The Hawaiian Islands.

The Falcon Mystery. A Boys' Story of the Hungarian Plain. By S. S. Smith. Illus. by James Reid. Harcourt, 1936. \$2.00.

The author's stories of little-known countries, of which this is the fifth, are well-written, absorbing, and, the publishers claim, authentic.

Beyond the Great Wall. A Boys' Story of Manchoukuo. By Edward Dragonet. Illus. by W. R. Lohse. Bobbs-Merrill, 1936. \$2.00.

Well-written and absorbing.

Indians

Singing Sands. By Grace Moon. Illus. by Carl Moon. Doubleday, Doran, 1936. \$2.00. Older girls.

Those familiar with Grace Moon's stories about Indians know how sensitively and understandingly she writes.

Indians of the Pueblos. A Story of Indian Life. By Therese O. Deming. Illus. by Edwin W. Deming. Edited by Milo B. Hillegas. Whitman, 1936. \$1.50. 4th grade up.

Excellent material, with unusually beautiful illustrations. Regret that the text is printed in blue ink, which makes it somewhat difficult to read. Recommended nevertheless.

The Scalp Hunters. By Hubert V. Coryell. Illus. by Wilfred Jones. Harcourt, Brace, 1936. \$2.00.

Indian warfare in Maine in the eighteenth century. Coryell writes a good story with careful attention to historical and geographical accuracy.

Indians Today. By Mario and Mabel Scacheri. Harcourt, Brace, 1936. \$2.00.

The Pueblos and Navajos are presented in a story and a series of beautiful photographs. An unusually interesting book.

Miscellaneous

William and His Friends. A Group of Notable Creatures in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Herded together by Elizabeth Naramore. Viking, 1936. 75¢.

A diminutive, singularly attractive book of pictures of the animals that inhabit the Metropolitan. William is a hippopotamus of blue pottery 3850 years old. His friendships are catholic and include creatures made of sheet-metal, glass, and china, of various ages—all winning beasts.

A Was an Archer, and One, Two, Buckle My Shoe. Nursery Rhyme Broad-sides. Decorations by Valenti Angelo. Holiday House, 50¢ each.

Attractive posters for kindergarten and primary grades.



From *Three Golden Oranges.* By Boggs and Davis. Longmans.

AN APPROACH TO POETRY APPRECIATION

(Continued from page 208)

terns are presented together, they will illuminate each other. The sultry reds and yellows of autumn, the cool greens of spring are familiar to all of us, but we are probably less conscious of the aesthetic and emotional overtones of these colors as ours is not a color conscious civ-

ilization as was, for instance, that of the Middle Ages. Since certain poets have made color an important part of their material, we must become aware of its values before we can develop an appreciation of their poetry.

The techniques discussed are only a

(Continued on page 240)

Growing Up With Books

GROWING up, in any sense, is difficult. But growing up in taste and discernment, in emotional poise and understanding—all of which is involved in growing up with books—is so difficult that many never attain adulthood in this sense at all. One has only to recall the audiences thronging to see inane talkies, listening to feeble radio programs, and reading the flabby fiction offered by the "pulp," to realize how many of us are dwarfed in arrested development.

From the point of view expressed in this year's Book Week slogan—"Books to Grow On"—good books may be divided into two classes.

First are the books that joyfully fulfill the interests of a certain age. That age may differ, in different individuals, but almost every great book is capable of quickening imagination if met at some certain stage of growth. Howard Pyle's *Story of King Arthur and his Knights* can alter the world for the boy who reads it at the psychological moment. And who can doubt that, encountered at the right age, *Little Women* may give girls a rich understanding of home and family loyalty? *Treasure Island*, *Kim*, and certain biographies are other books of this type. If come upon at the proper time, they light dark corners, shine down delightful, unsuspected byways, clarify the way ahead.

A number of investigations have been carried on to discover the ages for which certain titles hold the greatest interest. One elaborate piece of research on this subject has recently been completed by Dr. Carleton Washburne and Mrs. Mabel Morphett of the Winnetka, Illinois, public schools.

Bound up with this question of the ideal age for reading certain books is the

current tendency to rewrite children's classics in simplified vocabulary and sentence structure for younger pupils. Whether these "adapted" books are as suitable emotionally and aesthetically to the younger reader as the originals are to the somewhat older child for whom they were first intended offers an intensely interesting subject for study. One may well question the justification of these scientific fabrications until further research more adequately establishes the validity of these claims.

So much, then, for the first of these two classes. The second class includes the books of recurring significance, the books that grow up with one.

Robinson Crusoe, is such a book. To the young reader it is an absorbing story. To a maturing reader it may be a means of withdrawing, vicariously, from a too-insistent and crowded world. To others, it presents a somewhat grim philosophic commentary on human ingratitude.

Again, the Alice stories—*Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*—are books that will grow up with a reader. Where the child loves their fantasy, the mature reader delights in the elusive satire of the court trial, the mad tea party, and the mock-turtle's account of his education. Who can forget Osborne, the gentle schoolmaster, reading *Alice* for solace in the face of imminent death in *Journey's End*?

Such books as these have the power to be many things to many people, and to offer endless comfort and delight. Teachers and librarians who can put into a child's hand the book that he requires at the moment, and can lead him to realize the companionship of the books that will grow up with him are educators in the true sense of the word—those who lead forth.

AN APPROACH TO POETRY APPRECIATION

(Continued from page 238)

few of the many possible ones that are available. Their usefulness must depend upon the individual poem and the individual situation. Too often an extremely helpful technique is discredited because it is used for the wrong material. There is a real danger that this may happen with choral reading. No technique can be a blanket prescription but must be used with tact and discrimination. To attempt to choral read or dramatize all poetry would be fatal. The delicate lyric that is clearly an individual expression must be treated as such. A poem such as "The Ancient Mariner," despite the fact that it contains characterization and dramatic elements, cannot be dramatized without violating its spirit. Its drama is a drama of the soul that resists objective presentation. There will always be a place for

the sympathetic reading and discussion of poetry. Our criterion must be the pattern of the poem itself. What are its demands and how can they find fulfillment? These are the questions that must occupy us.

The defeatists among us have long assured us that poetry cannot be taught. Let us agree with them but add that it can be shared and experienced. Poetry is so broad and rich an art that within its confines are included appeals that can be made effective for every level of emotional and intellectual maturity. Our problem is to find the poem and the appropriate technique for every particular demand. Appreciation must be planned for, it will not merely happen. It is our happy obligation to lend our efforts to aid in the movement now abroad to create in America a culture of the people.



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PUEBLO INDIAN CHILD BAKING BREAD

From *Indians Today*, by Mario and Mabel Scacheri. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1936.